

that money is tight—a most vulgar condition to be in by the way; one will hear in the future that money is not, then we shall barter, offer glass beads for a lunch, or sell our virtue for a good dinner."

Here is the Oscar Wilde of it: "Yes, it is not so easy to be wicked although stupid people think so. To sin beautifully, as you sin, Reggie, even as I have sinned for years, is one of the most complicated of the arts. There are hardly six people in a century who can master it. Sin has its technique, just as painting has its technique. Sin has its harmonies, and its dissonances, as music has its harmonies and its dissonances. The amateur sinner, the mere bungler whom we meet with, alas; so frequently, is perpetually introducing consecutive fifths and octaves into his music, perpetually bringing wrong color notes into his painting. His sins are daubs or pot boilers, not masterpieces that will defy the insidious action of time. To commit a perfect sin is to be great, Reggie, just as to produce a perfect picture, or to compose a perfect symphony, is to be great. Francesco Cenci should have been worshipped instead of murdered. But the world can no more understand the beauty of sin, than it can understand the preface to 'The Egotist,' or the simplicity of 'Sordello.' Sin puzzles it; and all that puzzles the world frightens the world; for the world is a child, without a child's charm, or a child's innocent blue eyes. * * The man who invents a new sin is greater than the man who invents a new religion, Reggie, no Mrs. Humphrey Ward can snatch his glory from him. Religions are the Aunt Sallies that men provide for elderly female venturists to throw missiles at and demolish."

As Mrs. Windsor and Lady Locke were driving about a village they espied George Meredith, the novelist. Mrs. Windsor remarks: "How like he is to Watts' portrait of him! I never can get him to come near me, although I have read all his books. Mr. Amaranth says he is going to bring out a new edition of them 'done into English' by himself. It is such a good idea, and would help the readers so much. I believe he could make a lot of money by it, but it would be very difficult to do, I suppose."

"These strawberries are very good," says Reggie. "I should like to finish them, only I hate finishing anything. There is something so commonplace about it. Don't you think so? Commonplace people are always finishing up things, and getting through things. They map out their days and have special hours for everything. I should like to have special hours for nothing. That would be much more original."

"It is quite a mistake to believe, as many people do, that the mind shows itself in the face. Vice may sometime reveal itself in lines and change of contour, but that is all. Our faces are really masks given to us to conceal our minds with. Of course, occasionally the mask slips partly off, generally when we are stupid and emotional. But that is an inartistic accident. Outward revelations of what is going on inside of us take place far more seldom than silly people suppose. No more preposterous theory has ever been put forward than that of the artist revealing himself in his art. The writer, for instance, has at least three minds—his Society mind, his writing mind and his real mind. They are all quite separate and distinct, or they ought to be. When his writing mind and his real mind get mixed up together he ceases to be an artist. That is why Swinburne has gone off so much. If you want to write really fine erotic poetry you must live an absolutely rigid and entirely respectable life. The 'Lays Veneris' could only have been produced by a man who had a nonconformist conscience. I am certain that Mrs. Humphrey Ward is the most strictly orthodox Christian whom we have, otherwise, her books against applied Christianity could never have brought her so many thousand pounds. I never read her of course. Life is

far too long and lovely for that sort of thing; but a bishop once told me that she was a great artist, and that if she had a sense of gravity she would rival George Eliott. Dickens had probably no sense of humor, that is why he made second rate people die of laughing. Oscar Wilde was utterly mistaken when he wrote 'The Picture of Dorian Grey.' After Dorian's act of cruelty, the picture ought to have grown more sweet, more saintly, more angelic in expression."

Lady Locke remarks: "I never read that book." "Then you have gained a great deal. Poor Oscar! He is terribly truthful. He reminds me so much of George Washington."

Amaranth says: "There is nothing so interesting as telling a man or woman how bad one has been. It is intellectually fascinating. One of the greatest pleasures of having been what is called wicked is, that one has so much to say to the good. Good people love hearing about sin. Haven't you noticed that although the sinner takes no sort of interest in the saint, the saint has always an uneasy curiosity about the doings of the sinner?"

"How beautiful," says Lady Locke, speaking of a song, "and how wrong!"

"Surely that is a contradiction in terms. Nothing that is beautiful can possibly be wrong."

"Then how exquisitely right some women have been whom Society has hounded out of its good graces."

"Yes, and how exquisitely happy in their rectitude."

"But not in their punishment. I think it is silly to give people the chance of whipping you for what they do themselves."

"Society only loves one thing more than sinning."

"And what is that?"

"Administering justice."

Here is what Reggie has to say of cynicism: "Cynicism is merely the art of seeing things as they are, instead of as they ought to be. If one says that Christianity has never converted the Christians, or that love has ruined more women than hate, or that virtue is an accident of environment one is sure to be dubbed a cynic. And yet all these remarks are true to absolute absurdity."

Other epigrams and smart sayings in the book are—

"Truth without any clothes on frequently passes for epigram."

"Our minds are shot with moods as a fabric is shot with colors."

"Sensations are the details that build up the story of our lives."

"Prolonged purity wrinkles the mind as much as prolonged impurity wrinkles the face."

"To get drunk deliberately is as foolish as to get sober by accident."

"In conceit many a man and woman have found salvation, yet the average person goes on all fours grovelling after modesty."

"People who mean well always do badly."

"Good intentions are invariably ungrammatical."

"There is no such thing as luck in the world. There is only capability. Have you ever noticed that when a man is a failure his friends say he is an able man. No man is able who is unable to get on, just as no woman is clever who can't succeed in obtaining that worst, and most necessary, of evils—a husband."

"The amount of excellence going about is positively quite amazing, if we only know where to look for it; but good people in Society are so terribly afraid of being found out. Society is absolutely frank about its sins, but secretive about it lapses into goodness."

"Circumstances are the lashes laid into us by life."

"Nothing is so unattractive as goodness."

"One must perpetually doubt to be faithful."

"Intelligence is the demon of our age."

"People are so dreadfully solemn when they have made a name, that it is like doing a term of hard labor to be with them five minutes."

"Stupidity gives you a ticket-of-leave, and sheer foolish ignorance is complete emancipation, without even police supervision."

"It is not the man who makes money that is clever. It is the man who spends it."

"Genius is the art of not taking pains."

"One touch of Nature makes the whole world commonplace."

The book is issued anonymously. In effect it is a fine satire on the Oscar Wilde school, the latest and most dreadful affliction in Vanity Fair.

EXTON.

Awarded Highest Honors World's Fair.

DR. PRICE'S
Cream Baking
Powder.

The only Pure Cream of Tartar Powder.—No Ammonia; No Alum.
Used in Millions of Homes—40 Years the Standard.